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Authority <u>NND 943521</u>
By <u>MS</u> NARA Date <u>10/31/96</u>

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C O P YSECRETOFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
Washington 25, D.C.

16 September 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. WALTER ROBERTSON (DEPARTMENT OF STATE)

SUBJECT: Geneva Negotiations on Prisoners of War

1. In accordance with telephonic conversations with representatives of this office today, it is the position of the Department of Defense that the Chinese Communists should account to the U.S. for the ultimate fate of all 450 U.S. armed forces personnel.
2. The names of these individuals were conveyed to the Department of State and to Ambassador Johnson in July prior to his departure for Geneva. A further copy is attached hereto.
3. It should be particularly noted that the Department of Defense does not and has never alleged that any or all of these individuals are now alive or that they were ever prisoners of war. Rather, it is our position that they were either captured or killed in action under circumstances in which the UN forces were unable to determine their fate. Equally, it is our position that one or another of the elements of the Chinese Communist and/or North Korean forces were in a position at the time of the incidents concerned to determine their fate.
4. To cite an example, we have been able to determine through the interrogation of returned U.S. armed services personnel that some of these individuals were last seen engaged in combat and completely surrounded by enemy forces. Whether the individual died during that combat or was taken prisoner, it is the obligation of the enemy forces under the Geneva Convention to report upon his fate.
5. In other instances we have been able to determine from the interrogation of returned prisoners of war that some (perhaps 23) of the individuals listed in the group of 450 were in fact taken prisoner. For example, we have sworn testimony that a given individual was seriously wounded, in "prison camp number 5" on a given date, and was removed by the Chinese Communists during the night, after which he was never seen again.
6. On the basis of this evidence, we are also in a position to insist that an accounting for these individuals be rendered. The names of these individuals are included in the list of 450.
7. There is also evidence based upon radar plots and intercepted voice messages, as well as upon the recovery of casualties, that a small number of Air Force crews whose missions involved flights over the Sea of Japan during the Korean War were shot down by aircraft based in the Soviet Far East, some

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of whom are probably held by the Soviet Union. These cases (some 33) are of course not directly relevant to the current negotiations at Geneva. The missions on which these aircraft were flying, while related to the Korean War, are highly classified and the names of these individuals have never been included on any list for which we have demanded an accounting from the Chinese Communists.

8. In summary, it is the view of the Department of Defense that the Chinese Communists should make an accounting for the fate of the entire 450 whose names have been made available. As a negotiating point it may be added that at least 33 of these individuals were at one time in POW status. More were undoubtedly in such status but no positive evidence to that effect is available to us. In any case, however, we do not consider it desirable to treat these 33 in any way separately from the entire 450.

9. Some of the 450 may still be alive. However, no positive evidence on this score is available to us.

10. The Department of Defense has undertaken the most extensive analysis possible of all of its casualty figures and of the ultimate disposition of every member of the armed forces who served in Korea. On the basis of this analysis the above statistics have been developed. However, several million men served in Korea during the period 1950-53 and it cannot be said to be impossible that some individuals (who have on the basis of varying evidence been determined to be dead) may still be held by the Communists.

11. The U.S. should not be surprised, particularly in light of Japanese and German experience with the Soviets in World War II, if a number of completely unrecorded Americans are ultimately found to be alive or to have been alive and in Communist hands. Such individuals do not appear on the list of 450 nor on any other list which has ever been presented. Nor is there any significant evidence available at this time that such individuals exist. Neither do we suggest that any action can be taken with regard to this possibility.

12. Your attention is again invited to the undesirability of providing any information through any source which might lead the next of kin of these armed forces personnel discussed herein to assume or believe that these personnel might still be alive and held unless the Communists are prepared at some point to document such information.

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